

Northeast RFC (originally known as the Harford RFC)

The first HIC at this office was Charles (Charlie) Hopkins, Jr.

Eric Anderson (HRL retiree) reflections on visits to this RFC: I first visited the Hartford RFC with Tor Nordenson in 1965. The RFC was located out at Bradley Field. The HIC was Charlie Hopkins. Charlie had a unique personality and loved to tell jokes and stories. My main memory of that early brief visit to the office was of Charlie telling stories. As an airplane would pass by the window and the engine noise increase, so would Charlie's voice. Then as the airplane passed, the level of Charlie's voice would go back to normal. He never paused in telling the story. Also it seemed that one of the fellows in the office was designated to provide laughter for all Charlie's stories and jokes. Whenever Charlie started telling stories, this fellow was at his side and seemed to laugh on cue.

Carl Relyea (OHRFC retiree) remembers at one conference, a young, cocky professor from Dartmouth College lectured on statistics. He closed by saying, "What else could there be to consider?" Charlie Hopkins, HIC of Harford RFC, in his blazing sport coat, strode up to the platform. He pulled a cigar out of his mouth and said, "I'll tell you what else; luck, damn luck!" Applause followed. Mr. Relyea also recalls development assistance that was provided to the newly formed RFC in Hartford, CT which was to cover New England and eastern New York. Headwater discharge at the Troy dam was correlated with the storm tide 11 hours prior at the Battery, New York City, to make river forecast for Albany, NY. To gain further advance time, it was necessary to forecast the storm tide from the Atlantic Ocean. Using his background as a Navy aerologist and weather man on hurricane hunter flights, Bob Burnash (then on the Cincinnati RFC staff) formulated a procedure to forecast storm tide heights based on wind data.



Charles "Ace" Smith: I began my weather service career in January 1960 as a River District Hydrologist at the Weather Bureau Office in New Orleans, LA. My job was to forecast the lower Mississippi River and handle flash flood problems. I knew nothing about hydrology and wasn't sure what a hydrologist was. I learned on the job and fast. Locations on the Mississippi were forecasted using simple crest stage relation between upstream station and the downstream station. My educational background was in math and meteorology. Prior to the Weather

Bureau, I served in the United States Air Force. I entered the Air Force as a Second Lieutenant on July 17, 1954 as a weather officer. In September of 1954 I was assigned to MIT for a school year to study Meteorology. I was discharged from active duty in December of 1959 as a Captain. I received a Bachelor of Arts Degree with Honors in Math from the University of Connecticut in 1954. Later on

I also received a Master of Science Degree in Engineering Science from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1969. The summer of 1962, I got a call from the Office of Hydrology with an offer to go to Hartford RFC. Since Hartford was my hometown, I jumped at the opportunity. I went to work for Charlie Hopkins in June of 1962. Charlie was the first HIC (1955-1975). When Charlie retired, Bob Theisen became HIC. In 1971 I was promoted to Lead Hydrologist at the NERFC. Unlike some other RFCs Hartford had no in-house computer, so we did time-sharing on an offsite computer. Everything was done with punch tape not cards. My M.S. thesis (1968-1971) was a forecast model, charts and everything, for the Connecticut River basin done on an IBM 360. What I did for all forecasts was put everything into the computer and then all data/results went to punch tape and was then printed from the punch tape. Timesharing had to be paid for and was expensive, so my philosophy was one read - one print, this speeded things up considerably. I wrote many programs, one program converted punch tape ASCII to teletype machine; teletype had a limitation of 70 characters per line. All forecasts sent via teletypes. Several RFCs went on to use this program. Other tasks included sharing of data with WBO/RDOs; so once all the data was in the computer, punch tapes were created (precipitation, stages, temperatures, etc) and shared with these offices. NERFC was the first office to use QPF in river forecast. When AFOS came, NERFC moved its river model from the timesharing computer to it. I became the third Hydrologist-in-Charge on August 10, 1980 and retired in October 1992 prior to the RFC's relocation to Tauton, MA as part of MAR.

Ronald C. Martin began his career with the National Weather Service as a Meteorologist Intern at Western Region Headquarters in May 1970. In November 1970, he became a Hydrologist at the CNRFC. June of 1971 he moved to the LMRFC; October 1975 he transferred to Kansas City RFC; and July 1979 he became the Deputy Hydrologist in Charge at Middle Atlantic RFC. He became the fourth HIC of the Northeast River Forecast Center in April of 1993. He retired from the National Weather Service in January of 2003. Martin served in the United States Air Force from September of 1964 to February of 1969. He was a Weather Officer in France and England. He was discharged with the rank of Captain. He received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in German and Russian Languages from Ohio State University and was one course short of completing a Bachelor of Science degree in Meteorology at Texas A&M University. He also has a Master of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from Oklahoma State University.

Gregg B. Rishel became the fifth Hydrologist-In-Charge of the Northeast River Forecast Center in April of 2003. He began his career with the National Weather Service in September of 1985 as the Service Hydrologist at the Bismarck, ND Weather Forecast Office. In October of 1987 he moved to the Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center in Harrisburg, PA where he served as a Hydrologist and Service Hydrologist. In January of 1993 he became the Service Hydrologist for the Weather Forecast Office in State College, PA. In December of 1996 he went

west to Salt Lake City, UT as Deputy Chief of the Hydrologic Services and Climate Division for Western Region. His educational background includes a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology from The Pennsylvania State University in 1976, and a Master of Science Degree in Forest Hydrology from The Pennsylvania State University in 1980. He also earned a Master of Arts Degree in Organizational Management from the University of Phoenix in 2000.



After Rishel's untimely death the fall of 2006 an award was established in his name, the Gregg B. Rishel Award. Rishel made several important contributions to the hydrologic mission of the NWS, and was well known for his strong work ethic, passion for hydrology, and commitment to improving hydrologic services. The purpose of the Gregg B. Rishel Award is to recognize outstanding contributions by an individual to hydrologic science and/or service which contribute to the fulfillment of the hydrologic services mission of the National Weather Service.

Others that worked at the NERFC were John Thomas, later ER RH; Don Close, later went to Fort Worth RFC and Harrisburg RFC (PA there); Wayne Smith, Dale Hackett, first PA; Al Kachic, went on to become Eastern Region Regional Hydrologist; and Ira Bartfelt, Flash Flood Hydrologist (went on to Sacramento RFC); Joe Brumbach; Warren Silverzahn; Todd Mendell, now at CNRFC; Frank Lucadamo now at NWSHQ; Dave Curtis; Len Mazarowski, now at OHRFC; Bruce Whyte; Althea Austin, now at Puerto Rico WFO; Mike Sullivan; and Bob Theisen, who was the 2nd HIC.

